

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2201

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

On behalf of Michigan's hardworking tart cherry growers and processors, we urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to use all available authorities and funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to safeguard tart cherry growers and processors.

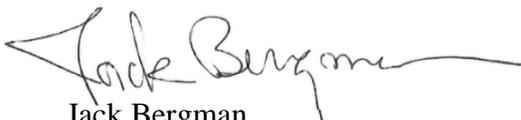
Relief is needed immediately as the coronavirus pandemic has stripped Michigan cherries of their markets and imposed new challenges on production. The tart cherry industry is already fighting issues in both the domestic and foreign markets which have resulted in low grower prices and an increased cost of production. Given this unprecedented situation, USDA must work diligently to stabilize the industry and ensure it is not overlooked in opportunities to benefit from coronavirus-related efforts.

As you know, the CARES Act included \$14 billion to replenish the Commodity Credit Corporation and \$9.5 billion to provide support for agricultural producers—including for specialty crops—impacted by coronavirus. It is critical to our constituents that tart cherry growers and producers be able to take full advantage of this new funding which USDA is working to implement. We request the availability of direct payments for tart cherry growers and cherry processors to ensure the CARES Act delivers meaningful relief.

Additional applications of USDA authorities and funding to help Michigan cherries could be used in the following ways: a substantial purchase of surplus product; domestic marketing support; aid to ensure the continuation of key supply chains for agricultural equipment and markets; and funding to help operations keep and protect workers. Finally, as our nation's agricultural sector faces unprecedented obstacles to produce and reach markets, USDA should initiate a whole-of-government effort to consider temporary measures which prioritize products made in the USA ahead of imported products.

As Michigan produces 75 percent of our nation's tart cherries, we thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress





Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress



Fred Upton  
Member of Congress



John Moolenaar  
Member of Congress